



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** State Board of Education & Early Development  
**Date:** November 11, 2022

**Thru:** Heidi Teshner, Acting Commissioner  
**Telephone:** (907) 269-4583

**From:** Susan McKenzie, Director  
Division of Innovation and  
Education Excellence  
**Subject:** Agenda 16A. Division of  
Innovation and Education  
Excellence Standing Report

### Division of Innovation and Education Excellence December 2022 Board Report

The Division of Innovation and Education Excellence (IEE) is dedicated to providing an excellent education for every student every day by focusing division efforts around the five priorities of [Alaska's Education Challenge](#); providing oversight of state and federally funded programs to ensure quality and equity of student services; and providing excellent technical assistance and support to districts statewide.

The IEE Division encompasses eleven teams that manage a wide range of programs and activities for the State. These teams include the Academic Support Team, the Assessment Team, the Career and Technical Education Team, the COVID Support Team, the Data and Accountability Team, the Early Learning Team, the ESEA Federal Programs Team, the Health and Safety Team, the School Recognition and Support Team, the Special Education Team, and the Teacher Certification Team. In addition, staff from each of these teams have been very involved in supporting the cross department, collaborative COVID Fiscal Team work.

Included in the IEE Board Report are highlights of work with initiatives, compliance, IEE Strategic Planning, and support to districts as it relates to Alaska's Education Challenge priorities.

## Alaska's Education Challenge Priority #1:

### Support all students to read at grade level by the end of third grade

#### Academic Support Team

- Thanks to the partnership with the Region 16 Comprehensive Center (R16CC), Alaska's Strategic Reading Plan now has a dashboard to track planning, progress, attendance, and outcomes for each strategy and component of the plan. We will use the dashboard to inform next steps and communicate progress and effects of our strategic plan. We are also working with Regional Education Laboratory Northwest (REL NW) to guide the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development in evaluation of our strategic plan.
- The Academic Support Team published its third Alaska Reading Newsletter on October 20, 2022. The newsletter provides timely information on professional development, initiatives available to districts, Alaska Reads Act updates, district science of reading highlights, and other reading-related topics. The publication is currently distributed to approximately 880 Alaskan Educators. As of October 20, records show the publication was opened 930 times. If you want to sign up for this, or any other DEED newsletter, please visit the website here: [DEED Newsletters](#).
- Alaska Reads Act progress is on track with the established timeline. In September, stakeholders were engaged in a survey of the draft regulations, followed by a week of virtual engagement sessions. Feedback was used to inform the draft regulations before they went to the Department of Law for review. Presentations have been held at many conferences and convenings to provide an overview and timeline of the Alaska Reads Act. Staff are currently completing supporting documents that will help districts with implementation, such as applications, waivers, flowcharts, etc. Virtual implementation meetings will begin with districts in January 2023 and occur weekly until May 2023.
- mCLASS by Amplify has been selected as the statewide literacy screener (required by the Alaska Reads Act). An introductory webinar occurred on October 27 with 57 attendees. Another introductory webinar is scheduled for November 2. Districts implementing mCLASS will have access to licenses for kindergarten through fifth grade, professional development, physical kit options, and progress monitoring tools. Results of an upcoming survey will help the department prepare for implementation and training needs.
- As part of Alaska DEED's Strategic Reading Plan, the English Language Arts (ELA) Core Curriculum project will support Alaska School Districts through a grant process to ensure more elementary classrooms are equipped with evidence-based core reading curriculum aligned to the state standards. A webinar launch was offered on October 28 with several interested districts in attendance. Participating districts will have support with adopting an evidence-based core reading curriculum, professional development, and implementation plans specific to each school. This is a two-year project, with implementation support provided in year two.
- The Alaska Literacy Blueprint was created in 2011 as part of the ELA Standards adoption and updated with the Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant. It was created to provide guidance to policymakers, districts, schools, and community leaders to ensure that all children learn how to read, write, and communicate effectively. Much has changed in literacy education since its creation. As part of our Strategic Reading Plan,

DEED has made it a priority to update the Alaska Literacy Blueprint. The project is currently recruiting a group of stakeholders that will review and provide feedback throughout the updating process. The project's completion is set for mid-April 2023, with the reveal of the newly updated Alaska Literacy Blueprint at the Alaska Reading Symposium in late April 2023.

### **Special Education**

- The Special Education team is working on the development of an upcoming eLive (virtual) course for Alaskan educators on Reading Differentiation for Struggling Readers. The course highlights the many ways the brain learns to read, using assessments and screeners, supporting all students in planning and classroom prep, and the specific learning disability of dyslexia.

## **Alaska's Education Challenge Priority #2: Increase career, technical and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.**

### **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**

- The statewide CTE Professional Development Conference was held October 16-18 in Anchorage. Partner organization Alaska Association for Career & Technical Education sponsored the event with support from DEED, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the University of Alaska. Congratulations to the following annual award recipients for extraordinary efforts supporting CTE programs:
  - CTE Teacher of the Year – *Barry Hartman, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District*
  - New CTE Teacher of the Year – *Ashley Kelly, Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District*
  - CTE Leadership Award – *Joni Simpson, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District*
  - Community Service Award – *Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center*
  - Innovative Program Award – *Taylor Burgh, Alaska Resource Education's Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources*
  - Career Guidance Award – *Andrea Wade, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District*
- The CTE online resource sharing and collaboration platform, Alaska Education Exchange, has been launched and is being promoted around the state. Access the platform at [www.alaskaeducationexchange.org](http://www.alaskaeducationexchange.org). This platform has been supported in part through a grant of DEED COVID discretionary funds to promote sharing of CTE resources among districts and stakeholders. A big Thank You to Alaska Association for Career & Technical Education for taking the lead on developing and managing this tool.
- DEED welcomes Faye Tanner – Statewide Coding and Computer Science Career Coordinator.
  - Her position was created to develop and improve software engineering and computer science education programs in Alaska, and to partner with programs and institutions that prepare Alaska's students for fulfilling careers in fields like coding, cybersecurity, telecommunications infrastructure engineering, and network engineering.

- Faye’s message to CTE stakeholders,
  - “CTE empowers students through its rich pathways with technical knowledge and employability skills here in Alaska. Computer science, with many career opportunities of its own, can be integrated into existing programs of study to give students the needed computational thinking skills for the 21st-century workforce. I would like to give support to all of you in every way I can to expand computer science education and integration in your programs of study and career pathways. Please feel free to contact me.”

### **Early Learning**

- Kenaitze Head Start recently completed construction on a new facility in Kenai. This will allow them to serve an additional 20 children and families.

### **Special Education**

- The Special Education Team developed and executed the third annual Cross-Agency Regional Training on Secondary Transition training for educators across the state, including educators in Charter and Correspondence programs. This training is in collaboration with DVR, SERRC, TVR, and Stone Soup Group and hosted over 150 educators with representation from over 40 districts to increase teacher knowledge of secondary transition and person-centered planning, career interest surveys and assessments, community resources and pre-employment opportunities for students to improve post-school outcomes.

## **Alaska’s Education Challenge Priority #3:**

### **Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources.**

#### **Academic Support Team**

- The Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA) will assist the department in offering a Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (RTI/MTSS) refresh opportunity for about 16 Alaska School Districts. The goal of the initiative includes working with districts to refresh RTI/MTSS school frameworks. The Alaska Reads Act requires each district to submit an intervention plan based upon the tiered systems of RTI/MTSS and this initiative will support district efforts with plans and implementation. This is a two-year project with professional development and coaching.
- Alaska is one of a small group of states participating in the SIPS (Stackable, Instructionally Embedded Portable Science) project. The goals of the project are to create a bank of instructionally embedded science assessment tasks, build state and local educator’s capacity, and engage educators, students, and parents. EdCount, the vendor managing the project, received a continuation grant for additional years of funding to pilot the project, and Alaska has been identified as a partner in this next phase of the project. Kick off planning will commence in December 2023.

## Assessment

- The Assessments Team, in partnership with assessment vendors, Data Recognition Corp (DRC) and NWEA, prepared for the release of spring 2022 assessment results.
  - In this reporting season, it was important to the department team to reflect the reality of the performance of Alaska's students while also providing clear information and guidance about how educators and families can best support students' academic development.
  - Through the creation of a comprehensive set of reporting interpretation resources, many of which are included in the [Alaska Assessments Toolkit](#), the team sought to provide resources and materials to aid districts in working with students and families.
  - Through the distribution of resources, webinars for testing coordinators and other educator groups, and presentations to a range of stakeholders, the Assessment Team has been actively seeking opportunities for outreach and enhancement of assessment literacy throughout Alaska.
  - Districts received assessment results and reports on October 24, 2022, and the public release of results took place on November 10, 2022.
- NAEP results were released nationwide on October 24, 2022. The 2022 NAEP results support DEED's call to action to remain committed to Alaska's Education Challenge and continue to respond to our state's unique needs.
  - NAEP validates what we knew before the COVID-19 pandemic. An unacceptable number of children are not reaching adequate levels of achievement in reading and mathematics. Compared to the nation, Alaska performed below the national average for grade 4 reading and mathematics and grade 8 reading and mathematics. However, Alaska did not decline further in reading. While there were declines in mathematic performance, they were much smaller than most states. Compared to 2019, Alaska's scores declined in both grade 4 and grade 8 mathematics. Scores in reading did not show statistically significant differences from 2019.
- The Assessments Team has created an [Assessments Toolkit](#) where educators can access a comprehensive set of resources we have created and shared with districts. The [Reporting Resources](#) folder are most helpful in guiding districts in their review of results with educators and in preparing teachers for presenting results to families.
- In response to previous NAEP and summative results, DEED has created the strategic reading plan, the Alaska Reads Act was passed in June and will address some of the continued needs. We do not need to establish change initiatives in response to the 2022 data, we need to stay the course with the efforts we have already undertaken and not let up the pressure on our commitment to these important and focused initiatives.
- Deputy Director, Kelly Manning, and State Board of Education Member Sally Stockhausen presented with NWEA representative Scott Griego on the AK STAR system at the National Association of State Boards of Education Annual Conference on October 26. Kelly, Scott, and Member Stockhausen were members on a panel discussion addressing innovative approaches to assessment and how the partnership between the department, state board of education, and the assessment vendor have contributed to success with implementation to date. The presentation was well received and provided a great opportunity to highlight DEED's work at a national level.

- Key activities since June 2022 include:
  - The Assessments Team, in partnership with assessment vendors, Data Recognition Corp (DRC) and NWEA, conducted assessment development activities in preparation for the Spring 2023 administration.
    - In partnership with NWEA, the team engaged in design meetings and activities to establish the computer adaptive test design for Spring 2023. Results of the AK STAR Alignment Study informed the design work by ensuring alignment information is considered in the simulations, review of item pools, and future item development plans.
    - To ensure the planned adaptive design is technically sound, DEED and NWEA continued to rely on consultation with Alaska’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for advising.
  - DEED and NWEA continued the Certified Facilitator Program with the second in-person meeting in Anchorage on September 22-23. The training focused on assessment purpose and use, allowing similar-sized districts to meet and collaborate.
- Alignment to Alaska’s Education Challenge goal:
  - By building on the results of the standard setting and alignment studies, DEED is able to honor the work and professional judgment of Alaskan educators in those activities.
  - After completing critical activities in preparation for assessment reporting, DEED was prepared to exceed previous levels of engagement and information sharing in regard to assessment results and reports interpretation in fall 2022.
  - Through the continuation of professional learning sessions and a range of presentations to diverse audiences throughout the state, DEED expects to increase assessment literacy and understanding about data use for meaningful instructional change. Through increased professional capacity, Alaska’s educators will have the knowledge and skills to effectively analyze student assessment data and make informed decisions to address student academic needs.

### **COVID Support Team**

- DEED sought applications for summer school activities from entities across the state. This was done on a competitive basis to encourage evidence-based applications that could be ranked to provide funding for as many proposals as possible.
  - Twenty-five entities applied. All awarded entities will utilize evidence-based practices.
  - Awarded entities support at least one of the areas of Alaska’s Education Challenge.
    - Many of the projects have a focus on improving student reading achievement to match grade level.
    - Some of the projects provide career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.
    - All the projects are working to close achievements gaps due to the pandemic.

## Data and Accountability

- The accountability system and school designation calculations are underway using data from the 2021-2022 school year. DEED anticipates that school designations will be announced in late November to early December. Once all of the designations are completed, DEED will host a webinar to review the materials that will be distributed to districts.
  - As a reminder, the U.S. Department of Education (US-Ed) issued an accountability addendum template in December 2021. The addendum was submitted to US-Ed on July 12, 2022, and DEED received approval on August 8, 2022.
  - The addendum provides for the following changes:
    - Extend long-term goals by two years
      - Academic Achievement
      - Graduation Rates
      - Progress in Achieving English Learner Proficiency
    - Prior year data will not be used to reach a minimum number of 10 students per indicator
    - Combine grades Kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade spans together for each indicator
    - Growth indicator will not be included in this year's system but will appear again in the following school year
    - Third Grade ELA will replace the Growth indicator for elementary and secondary schools that are not high schools
    - No schools will exit Comprehensive Support and Improvement lowest 5% or Targeted Support and Improvement designations so that the state can provide an additional year of support
    - School years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 will not count towards time in designation status
- Graduation Rates – The 2022 graduation rates have been calculated.
  - The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is 77.82%.
  - The five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is 83.04%.
  - District and school graduation rates were distributed on October 25, 2022.
- Dropout Rate – The 2022 dropout rate for grades seven to 12 is 3.68%.
- Participation Rates –
  - AKSTAR and Alaska Science Assessments
    - ELA – 79.72%
    - Math – 79.48%
    - Science – 75.16%
  - Alternate Assessments
    - ELA – 77.51%
    - Math – 77.70%
    - Science – 70.00%

## Early Learning

- DEED was awarded a 5-year Head Start Collaboration Grant (2022-2027). The grant was written in partnership with the Alaska Head Start Association. The grant's purpose is to

facilitate collaboration among Head Start agencies and entities that carry out activities designed to benefit low-income children from birth to school entry, and their families.

### **ESEA Federal Programs**

- DEED's Migrant Education Program team provided training on the identification and recruitment of migratory children to all school districts operating a migrant education program. Approximately 180 school district staff from 39 school districts participated in these trainings. Annually, districts are responsible for identifying and recruiting approximately 13,000 migratory children statewide. Once migratory children are recruited, districts provide them with Title I-C funded instructional and support services that address their unique educational needs that result from their migratory lifestyle and permit them to participate effectively in school.
- Several districts have reached out to DEED regarding English Learner (EL) exit criteria and have expressed desire to have more than one path to exiting EL status. Currently, EL students must obtain a certain score on the ACCESS for ELLs assessments. The DEED EL Team has researched the exit criteria of other states, disseminated a survey to districts about their thoughts on expanding exit criteria, and have shared the results of that survey with several advisory groups. DEED is now preparing for the next steps of organizing a stakeholder group to explore this potential option further. By allowing EL students to demonstrate their English Language Proficiency (ELP) in multiple ways, this provides those students greater opportunity to exit EL status and spend more time in academic content classes by reducing time spent assessing for ELP and, potentially, reducing the time spent out of content classrooms as they receive language assistance services.
- The U.S. Department of Education (US-Ed) invited Alaska 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) to present some of our Local Evaluation tools at a national webinar for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program Managers this fall.

### **School Recognition and Support**

- The Project for Successful School Improvement
  - DEED in partnership with the Region 16 Comprehensive Center has begun the roll out for the Project for Successful School Improvement to all of our CSI/TSI designated schools this year.
  - DEED hosted an in-person workshop to train CSI 5% school principals and district liaisons on this new process September 28-30, 2022.
    - This process requires school and community input and engagement in the assessment, development, and implementation of evidence-based actions and approaches to school improvement in a three-year plan.
  - Schools will receive tiered support per their designation status as determined through our state ESSA plan:
    - All designated schools will have access to regular webinars or technical assistance calls to our school improvement specialist.
    - All designated schools will receive a printed or digital copy of Alaska's Empowerment Playbook, including a step-by-step approach to community and asset-based school improvement, planning templates, and model agendas.
    - TSI/CSI Graduation Rate schools will receive \$25,000 each in 1003(a) grants for planning and implementation.

- CSI lowest 5% will receive \$50,000 in 1003(a) grants for planning and implementation.
- CSI lowest 5% will receive additional assistance in planning through Empowerment Specialists, a contracted position specific to this process as developed by DEED, the Region 16 Comprehensive Center, and ADI (Academic Development Institute).

Note: This work also falls heavily under Alaska’s Education Challenge Priority #5: Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes.

### **Special Education**

- In collaboration with the Deaf Education Board and Alaska State School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Special Education Team is updating qualifications of Educational Interpreters to enter support programs to increase interpreting skills and provide better access to education for deaf and hard of hearing students across the state.

**Alaska’s Education Challenge Priority #4:  
Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.**

### **Academic Support**

- Several professional development opportunities were offered to districts during the months of September and October to provide support with foundational reading skills:
  - Heggerty (phonemic awareness)
  - Phonics for Reading (phonics)
  - Core Reading (resource for foundational skills)
  - Multiple Measures (assessments for foundational skills)
  - University of Florida Literacy Initiative-UFLI (foundational skills teaching materials)

Feedback received was very positive from the participants with requests for future professional development opportunities. Training was loaded onto Canvas and Alaskans continue to access the courses!

- Professional development in math concepts will be offered for teachers soon:
  - Book studies on math concepts with the author engagement
  - Arranging guest speakers on topics
  - Offering DEED-led or hosted courses on Math and Science Standards related to unpacking, lesson design, and formative assessment strategies.
- Registration for the Science of Reading Symposium will open in December for the event that is scheduled for April 28 - 30, 2023. The goal of symposium this year is to “Empower Alaskan educators to connect understanding of reading science to classroom and leadership practices, resulting in increased reading proficiency for students.” Daily focus will be:
  - Friday: “Celebrating Successes” that have occurred over the past year with increased implementation of the science of reading in Alaska’s schools.
  - Saturday: “Connecting Knowledge to Practice” with a deeper dive into classroom and school level implementation of the science of reading.

- Sunday: “Empower Educators” to continue the implementation of evidence-based reading practices in our schools.

**Early Learning**

- Teachers from Head Start and School District pre-elementary programs participated in a 2-day virtual training on utilizing the common pre-elementary assessment tool, Teaching Strategies Gold.

**ESEA Federal Programs**

- DEED partnered with the Region 16 Comprehensive Center and the University of Alaska Anchorage’s Pace program to host a shared in-service on Friday, October 21, 2022. This shared in-service provided a few small districts the opportunity to connect and share professional learning. The keynote speaker for the day was John Hattie, the author of Visible Learning, which was opened to a larger audience. Breakout sessions featured DEED content specialists in English, Math, Science, Early Reading, Social Studies, School Climate, and Trauma Engaged Practices. Two districts did a joint presentation on MAP Growth Analysis for Instruction. This shared in-service was a product of the Designed Professional Learning in a Virtual World (DPLV) project.
- The Alaska Afterschool Conference, co-hosted by DEED, has changed its name to the Alaska Out-of-School Time Conference. This year’s conference will be held in Anchorage, November 16 - 18 and will include three pre-conference sessions, two keynotes, and 38 unique breakout sessions. The conference workshops focus on topics such as staff management and team building, literacy, STEM, using data to improve programming, and providing a safe and supportive environment.

**Health & Safety**

- eLearning programming continues to be well attended by district staff. The following chart shows the number of course completions for our highest trafficked health and safety eLearning courses for educators as well as the student facing courses on suicide prevention and those under the Alaska Safe Children’s Act.
- The eLearning course *School Crisis Response Planning* was updated with COVID-19 information, new state and national resources and recent data relating to school emergencies.
- The Health and Safety Team has started the review for updating the first three trauma-engaged school modules, which will include linking them to the resources that have been developed since they were first launched.

<b>DEED Online eLearning Courses</b>	<b>July – September 2022</b>	<b>Lifetime #'s</b>
Part A: Suicide Awareness	1,477	23,420
Part B: Suicide Prevention	775	12,198
Part C Suicide Intervention	447	7,886

Part D: Responding to Suicide- Postvention Guidelines	288	6,451
Overcoming ACEs in Alaskan Schools	113	2,533
Trauma-Engaged and Practicing Schools	51	1,200
Trauma-Sensitive Schools	80	1,648
Classroom Practices	37	780
Emotional Intelligence	27	670
Family Partnerships	17	493
Mind-Body Connections	23	592
Childhood Traumatic Grief	34	696
Self-Regulation	20	650
Self-Care	29	618
Trauma-Engaged Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health	14	206
Overcoming Anxiety and Stress in Alaskan Schools (Released Spring 21)	46	318
Opioids 101 and the Opioid Epidemic 101	9	172
Narcan Administration for an Opioid Epidemic	33	244
E-Cigarette Use Among Alaska Teens (Released Summer 21)	18	133
Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Training for Educators	1,361	31,037
Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse & Neglect	1,977	31,725
Prenatal Alcohol and Drug Related Disabilities	1,850	23,202
Navigating Transitions (student courses)	79	1,026
Brees Law (student courses)	194	7,942
<b>Total Course Completions</b>	<b>8,999</b>	<b>151,483</b>

### Special Education

- A survey was sent to districts to collect information on what they are currently doing to prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals, specifically those in

positions related to the special education field. The results will be shared with the State Board of Education once collected and compiled.

**Teacher Certification**

- Since August, the Alaska Teacher Recruitment & Retention (TRR) Implementation efforts have been focused on the first meetings of the four established subcommittee meetings. Subcommittee meetings are meeting monthly. Subcommittee membership is still open to all interested stakeholders.

More information concerning the TRR Action Plan Implementation can be found [here](https://education.alaska.gov/trr) (<https://education.alaska.gov/trr>) or by contacting Dr. Barbara Adams at [barbara.adams.aas@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.adams.aas@gmail.com).

- 2022-2023 First Day Vacancy Report  
In September, districts reported the number of certified positions that were not filled on the first day of the school year by certified educators.  
Below are the first day vacancy data for the school years 2019-2020 through 2022-2023.

School Year	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Total First Day Certified Vacancies by full time equivalency (FTE)	155.1	226.8	312.9	393.72

For school year 2022-2023, approximately 394 certified positions were not filled on the first day of the school year. Of those 394 positions, there were 255 classroom teacher and 80 special education vacancies.

For this report, a vacancy is an unoccupied certified position identified by the school district. The vacancy may be the result of a new position created because of increased enrollment; a position abandoned by a contracted, certified educator; or a position that was advertised but did not attract a certified candidate that met the district’s requirements or needs. A vacancy is reported by full-time equivalency or FTE.

The first day of school is the first day that certified educators would be required to report to work. The first day varies from district to district because each district establishes its own calendar.

- 2022-2023 Emergency & Alternative Routes to Certification  
Districts are continuing to rely on an alternative certificate to fill their vacant positions for the 2022-2023 school year. The chart below shows the emergency and alternative certificate types and the number of each certificate issued as of November 1, 2022.

Certificate Types	Number
Emergency	277
Initial Program Enrollment	75
Special Education Alternative Path	24

Source: Teacher Certification Database. November 1, 2022

- TEACH-AK Update  
The Educator Application and Certification Hub of Alaska (TEACH-AK) project to move most of the Teacher Certification Office’s applications and other services to a web-based environment has continued to experience delays due to competing projects and staffing issues. DEED and the vendor are working on revising the timeline for

completion of the customization, historical data transfers, staff training, and the go-live date.

- **Alaska Pacific University Accreditation Visit**

On November 13-15, the Alaska Pacific University (APU) hosted a visiting team of trained peer reviewers from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Prior to the site visit, the visiting team conducted a review of the information provided by APU to determine if APU is meeting CAEP's standards. The site visit was spent reviewing evidence, verifying data, and examining artifacts. In addition, the site team interviewed program leaders, faculty, mentor teachers, students, P-12 administrators, and others.

The visiting team will provide a written report to APU and CAEP's Accreditation Council. CAEP's Accreditation Council will determine the accreditation status of APU during their Spring 2023 meeting and will notify APU and the State Board of Education shortly thereafter.

### **Alaska's Education Challenge Priority #5:**

**Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes.**

#### **COVID Support Team**

- DEED is partnering with the Department of Health to provide districts and private schools with funding for in-school COVID-19 testing for the 2022-2023 school year.
  - At this point over thirty districts and two private schools have applied for these funds.
  - Districts have been informed of their funding level and are working to utilize their available funding.
    - These actions will support families and communities, especially in rural Alaska, maintaining and improving both physical and mental health.
    - Some districts are utilizing funds to provide vaccination opportunities for students and families.

#### **ESEA Federal Programs**

- DEED's English Learner team is developing an Individual Student Score Report for alternate scoring eligible students, parent letters, and an interpretive guide (if WIDA's existing guides will not be sufficient). This supports school partnerships with parents and families by providing more communication and information to allow them to have a better understanding of their children's academic achievement, needs, and overall context of the school environment.
- DEED supported rural districts in applying to the U.S. Department of Education for the Title V Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) funds. 42 out of 43 districts eligible for awards applied. Over \$800,000 in federal awards were issued directly to districts.
- DEED issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to utilize American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Homeless State Activities funds. The proposal due date is November 17, 2022. DEED

will contract with an organization to help districts identify and support students experiencing homelessness and expand outreach to these students.

## **Health & Safety**

- The refresh of the Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) work has continued with monthly trainings and coaching sessions with Northwest PBIS for Cohort 1 since August. There was a School Wide Information System (SWIS) training held in September and October, resulting in a number of Certified SWIS Facilitators being certified across Alaska. In addition to the work with the current cohort, IEE has begun reaching out to potential Cohort 2 participants.
- The Alaska Safe Children's Act team has completed the state authored student training to support districts with the implementation of the Alaska Safe Children's Act in grades 7-12. DEED, in consultation with school districts across Alaska, developed the online curriculum entitled Bree's Law Education, to better support teachers and to create consistency in content and messaging for all students in Alaska. The curriculum contains three grade bands (7-8, 9-10, 11-12). Each grade band has a version A, and a version B and each version includes 5 modules on dating violence awareness and prevention and sexual assault/abuse awareness and prevention. The curriculum meets the full requirements for student training under the Alaska Safe Children's Act, including requirements for Bree's Law and Erin's Law and is designed to help prevent childhood sexual abuse and teen dating abuse. The curriculum is housed in the eLearning Classroom and is available to all districts. The team is also working to develop evaluation tools to gather feedback from educators that will include a survey as well as regional listening sessions.
- The Health and Safety team has been hearing from districts across the state about the significantly disruptive problem of vaping in schools. This has been a growing problem and as a result some key partnerships have developed and strengthened. In June 2021, an eLearning module course with additional resources was released for school staff to learn about the issues around e-cigarettes. This project was done in conjunction with the Tobacco Prevention and Control (TPC) team in Public Health and 133 people have completed the course as of September 2022. Subsequently, a [fact sheet](#) for schools and communities with resources was developed that included suspension data for tobacco use and alternatives to suspension that schools could utilize if they were interested. A tobacco policy review of 53 districts has been completed by the TPC and is available for districts to see how their policies stack up. The TPC program funds community grantees throughout Alaska. Fifteen of those grantees are supporting comprehensive tobacco-free policy work in their service areas. The American Lung Association – Alaska has been working with the Association of Alaska School Boards to update their model policy so that districts that use their services can adopt the policy as they need. The TPC team is working on a resource packet of information for schools and communities around the topic of youth vaping that will be released in November 2022. Health and Safety staff continue to work with these partners and school districts to meet the challenges of vaping in schools.